,Ladies and gentlemen
.distinguished guests

I'm honored to be with you this evening. I love American universities. Several decades ago, I was a graduate student not far from here, at Stanford, and it easily competes for some of the best years of my life. It’s where I learned first hand that American universities are places where the future American leadership is shaped and .forged

I’m here to tell you a bit about how I see the complexities of today’s world but first let me say this- when we hope for a better .world, we're thinking of you

As we approach the end of 2015, it’s clear that we are still in the eye of an .unprecedented geopolitical storm

The world has not witnessed this scale of transformation since the end of World War I, about 100 years ago.
Yet, this age of change– as it did back then- creates challenges, while uncovering opportunities.

Within the global arena, the world order is in a way collapsing, or at the very least, shattering into pieces in front of our eyes.

There is no single center of geopolitical gravity.  Not the bi polar system that we knew for decades during the cold war, nor the multi-polar system that we knew for most of the last 25 years.

In fact, there is no pole at all.

The whole world has become one big gestalt, a global village, as literally, no single player can tackle any major challenge on its own.

Within this global village, there are those who perceive America as weakening.

Objectively- that is wrong.

The United States is still the mightiest power on earth. Militarily, strategically, economically, and diplomatically.

But perceptions these days translate into a reality. Rivals and competitors, China and Russia, ISIS, the Ayatollahs in Iran, or Syrian President Assad, are all probing the American resolve, strength and determination.

What will happen in the rest of 2015 and probably throughout 2016 will be the direct consequences of this prodding.

The challenges that face our societies today are many, and since there is no single geopolitical center worldwide, the only way to tackle these issues is through

cooperation between states, leaders, and societies.

From radical Islamist terror, to the Iranian nuclear and hegemonic intentions, it's clear that what will be most needed in the coming years, more than anything else, is leadership.

Open-eyed, determined, tenacious leadership, prepared to look at reality, however dangerous, directly in the eye and be ready to act upon it.

Take the migrant crises, as thousands flee their homes in search of a better future.

Only leadership that knows to cooperate can set clear priorities for any effective action.

Too often do we see a gap between a vision for a better future, and the lack of

implementation that could actually create a better future.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, just a quarter of a century ago, we all believed that, as Fukuyama called it, at the time, it was the end of history.

But today's world is much more diversified than simply clashing ideologies. And when you look at countries such as Singapore, South Korea, China, and even Hungary in the EU, it's clear that there are alternatives to the Western way of liberal government. These are all examples of societies that, based on different history, value systems and traditions, were led by autocrats, quite successfully, and genuinely chosen by their people. Of course, we would not have elected any one of them, but they are very effective within their societies.

While American exceptionalism is warmly embraced by many in our immediate

circles, the rest of the world raises questions over its legitimacy.

One burning challenge where cooperation is direly needed is combatting radical Islamist terror. In a region that spreads from Marrakech in Morocco to Bangladesh and even to Bali in Indonesia, where about 1.3 billion Muslims live, most yearn for the same kind of better lives for themselves, for their children and grand children. But it's a region also housing some extremely frustrated and active terrorists. And in a way, there is certain resonance between this backwardness and the effectiveness of mobilizing power of radical Islam.

It's no longer confined specifically to this region either. You know it all too well, as do the Europeans. We in Israel have suffered from it from the day the state was established.

More than 40 years ago I commanded over the Israeli equivalent of your seal team 6

or the delta forces, long before they came into existence. I found myself, in May of 1972, disguised as an airport mechanic, with overalls and everything, personally leading a raid over a hijacked airplane, the Sabena airplane, that landed in Ben-Gurion airport demanding the release of 300 terrorists. When we stormed it, the armed terrorists deployed explosives all around the cabin, and they were holding several hand grenades without the safety pins. Our plan was to prepare them for taking off, and we even arranged that the prisoners they had asked for would be seen from a distance, being mounted from buses with prisoner clothes into another airplane. But we took them by surprise, and within 90 seconds the shooting was over. Two terrorists were killed, and we took another two. We saved all passengers, more than one hundred, except for one. We had one young officer slightly wounded in his arm – his name was Lieutenant Benjamin .Netanyahu, later on our Prime Minister

Our success in the operation meant that no hijacked plane ever dared to land in Israel. But the terror didn't stop. Just a few months later, during the Munich Olympics, 11 of our athletes were massacred by PLO terrorists. Then, our Prime Minister, Golda Meir ordered that all terrorists that were involved would be eliminated. So I found myself, several months later, early ‘73, disguised as a young lady with everything that entailed, leading a raid to find three of these terrorists in their apartments, in two separate buildings, in a luxurious compound inside Beirut.

We arrived after midnight. I sent the different squads into the two buildings, and waited outside with another stocky blonde at street level. Some 30 seconds later, a door of a red Renault opened on the other side of the street. Mind you, they had weapons in the apartment, bodyguards on the street, and they deliberately rented the two apartments near the Gendarmerie, an armed police station. So the door of the car opens, one of the bodyguards comes

out, opens his leather jacket, pulls out a pistol and starts walking up the street. So I murmured to the blonde, "there’s no choice", and I still remember the shock in this bodyguard’s eyes when he saw us, the two ladies, open their jackets and pull out Uzis and start shooting. He immediately fled into the car, but our shots hit the horn of the car and the whole commotion woke up the whole street. Meanwhile, the bodyguard rolled out from the other side, behind a low stone fence. It took about 90 seconds, and a Landrover came from the Gendarmerie station. But they couldn't understand where the shooting was coming from, and we surprised them from probably 20 yards and opened fire. There was some shouting of wounded people, but we saw them jump behind that same stone fence and they started to exchange fire with us. After another two minutes, another Landrover drove up. They saw the first one crashed into the line of parking cars on the other side of the street, so we had to engage quickly, before they

disembarked. The second Landrover also crashed into the parked cars and now we had two shooting fronts, one 20 yards away, the other from 50 yards. After another two minutes, our squads completed their mission and came downstairs. We climbed into our cars, two American station wagons that Mossad agents rented. I ordered to start driving but was notified that one officer was missing. It was Yoni, the elder brother of Prime Minister Netanyahu, the same Yoni who was killed three years later during the raid on Entebbe. So we stopped to pick him up, and while we did, a third Landrover arrived. Now, we had the whole group shooting back at them, and after throwing hand grenades, we pulled out, leaving back needle-like tetra pods so that anyone who'd try to drive behind us would get flat tires on the spot. The whole ordeal lasted 7 minutes, ending with three terrorists killed, and one of our soldiers slightly wounded. That's all. It took probably less time than it took me to tell you about it now. Within

30 minutes of landing we were back in the Mediterranean swimming to the rubber dinghies that were supposed to take us home.

So these operations very successful, but they never put an end to terrorism. As a 20-year old, when I fought terror, I didn't think 40 plus years later I would still be fighting it.

It's a generational war.

If there is a lesson here, it is that terror should be fought head on and must be defeated. This is as relevant now as was then.

Look at ISIS.
ISIS is weaker than people assume, but the web of terrorist organizations that ISIS is part of is extremely resilient and stable. And since they are only loosely connected, they live on a very tight budget, yet they're mobilizing from a pool of a hundreds of

millions of frustrated Muslims, and living among them. This terror hub is made of ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra and half a dozen of other terrorist organizations in Syria, Lashkar-e-Taiba in India, the Houthis in Yemen, the Shabaab in Somali, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and Hezbollah and Hamas and more. This is the kind of generations-long fight that our ancestors had with the pirates on the high seas. It demanded close cooperation among leaders of the world in gathering intelligence, arrests, and in operations. It demanded an unflinching political will to stay the course and win. Here too, it won't be easy, because there'll be successes and setbacks, and many painful moments.

Embedded in this fight against ISIS are two ironies. The first irony is that Syrian President Assad slaughtered 250 thousands of his own citizens using tanks, artillery, jet fighters, helicopters, even chemical weapons, and it did not suffice to mobilize the British parliament and Prime Minister

Cameron, or the US congress and President Obama. Then came ISIS and beheaded two journalists in front of the cameras. It's an old practice in the Middle East and still used by some of our allies, allies of the free world, within their own monarchies. But this time, it was done in front of the camera, and the video went viral, and within 48 hours the entire world was mobilized against them. Here lies the irony. Although the result was ultimately positive, since the international community woke up to the dangers of ISIS, it's telling of the hollowness of our decision-making .processes

Here's irony number two: If we assume the coalition is successful in suppressing ISIS within one year – a feat that is not impossible – than who won? To the best of my judgment, the winner here is Assad. The coalition eliminated his main opponent- ISIS- and allowed him to focus on the rest of the rebels, those groups who are the moderates so to speak that we are

trying to help. The first ones to take note of this paradox were the Turks, at the height of the fight over Kobani. But the Turks were not ready to help the Americans in Kobani, or the Kurds, without the Americans agreeing to target Assad as well. They even proposed a practical way to do it, and said, let's announce that the Northern region of Syria is a humanitarian zone for refugees, where they can receive international aid. However, in order to keep it safe from Syrian attacks, this region would have to be considered a "No Fly Zone."

They didn't say so explicitly but it was expected that once you impose a "No-fly Zone" you'd inevitably clash with the Syrian air force. This could have created a window of opportunity for the Turkish, American, Emirates' and Jordanian air forces, all of whom are much superior to the Syrians, to destroy the Syrian air force, and destroy their air defense system, command and control system, and change

forever the balance of power between the rebels and Assad. But for reasons that are not clear, probably somehow related to the fact that the "Red Line" on the use of chemical weapons was not imposed, a wide scale action against Assad was not .taken

I strongly believe that a coordinated effort against ISIS could practically destroy it within a year. But you cannot do it with a piecemeal strategy. Every passing month that ISIS still stands on its feet against the US and Sunni-led coalition, creates a huge source of inspiration for the young European-turned-Muslims and others around the world. But when you want to win a war, you have to think twice and in advance. It's not easy, and it's costly – but once you have decided to go forward, you have to execute forcefully and intensively, .and win it

I used to tell Israelis that when dealing with the fight against terror, we're quite

effective in killing mosquitoes, but we need to drain the swamp, since that's the root cause of mosquitoes and malaria.

The same applies to the world. We are quite effective in dealing with pointed tasks, but not so when dealing with the root causes. We have to establish a sense of community, a community of nations that sincerely care about each other. Lest we develop this attitude, we won’t have a normal life, not here in this continent, not in the Middle East or anywhere else.
If so many suffer daily, all of us will suffer.

This lack of cooperation has implications for the future, but also for today. The migrant crisis- the thousands (MILLIONS?) of men, women, and children, risking their lives in order to find a better one- is a tragic example of how our global community has failed to work

together, and how they are ignoring the root cause of this crisis.

The lack of decisiveness in the last few years- the red lines that were set and ignored, the calls for humanitarian aid that were dismissed, the need for a no-fly zone- these decisions not to decide have startling implications for tomorrow.

A few remarks about Iran. The Iran nuclear deal is already a done deal. But let me be clear. Israel will remain vigilant and always keep ALL options on the table. The name of the game here is suspect and verify. Behind closed doors we must work jointly with our Intelligence Communities to allocate enough assets to make sure any violation will be promptly identified. Together, we must define our red lines, and farfetched as it may seem- define what constitutes bringing the military option back to the table.

Under the circumstances created by this deal, the U.S. should consider equipping Israel a qualitative military edge that would enable us to carry out a more effective and independent operation if both governments agree that Iran brutally broke the agreement and is charging towards a nuclear weapon.

I of course hope for the better, but the question is whether it will really work. A potentially military nuclear Iran is a challenge for region and world. It will mark the end of a conceivable non-proliferation regime for the world. Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and later on Egypt will all turn militarily nuclear. The countdown towards Prof. Alison Graham's disturbing prediction of nuclear terror will start.

Past experience teaches us some valuable lessons. In the last 35 years there were six second-grade nations who tried to become a nuclear military power. Two of them gave up voluntarily- Libya following

Lockerbie under American and British pressure, and South Africa with the change of regime. Two were blocked physically by a surgical attack, the Iraqis and the Syrians. And two others defied the whole world and ended up with nuclear military capability, Pakistan and North Korea. There is no doubt in my mind that the Iranians are trying to move in the footsteps of North Korea. And thus I advise to stick to the Suspect, Verify, and Be Ready to .Act plan if / when it breaks down

.Hopefully it won't

It's usually said in the Middle East that an optimist is a pessimist with experience. But I prefer to stick to Churchill's words, that the difference between a pessimist and optimist is that "a pessimist sees the difficulties in any opportunity and an optimist sees the opportunities in any difficulty." I prefer to look at the .opportunities

In Israel we need to focus on the right opportunities, including resuming a working relationship and if possible, even trust with President Obama's White House. Intensifying our intelligence efforts over Iran, setting red lines and ensuring the qualitative military edge with our neighbors is maintained, as well as the military options against Iran. At the same time, in coordination with the U.S, Israel must engage immediately with the moderate neighbors, the Saudis, The Gulf states, the Jordanians, the Egyptians, even Turkey, in a grand framework of a regional security agreement. We have a huge underlying common interest in fighting the radical Islam, in fighting the nuclear and hegemonic intentions of Iran, and in pushing together a solution to the .Israeli-Palestinian conflict

This last element is not widely accepted in Israel because of the tragic and blood-filled history we have had with our Palestinian neighbors. But that must not

distort us from seeing the real interest of Israel. Israel has a compelling imperative, a compelling imperative, to move towards a two-state solution. Many political players in Israel don’t like it, major parts of the population don’t accept it intuitively because it isn’t congruent with the Palestinian terror and violence they endured so often in the streets. But the reasoning is painful but simple: there are 13 million people, 8 million Israelis, 5 million Palestinians in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. If this entire area is ruled by one political entity named Israel, it will become inevitably, and that's the key word, inevitably, either non-Jewish or non-democratic, neither of which is the Zionist dream. If millions of Palestinians with clear national aspirations can vote for our Parliament, the Knesset, than a bi-national state par excellence is created, and within a generation or a generation and a half, a bi-national state with a Muslim majority. And if they cannot vote for the Knesset,

than that’s not a democracy. I don't want to draw a comparison with another country in the previous century, but as Mark Twain used to say, "history does not repeat itself, but it rhymes.” And we should pay attention to that.

We have the opportunity to embark on this imperative with the rest of the moderate Arab nations that hold our same perception of reality. Yet in order to do so we have to put an end to the illusion that it can somehow be miraculously done with the Arab players giving up on their intention to see the Palestinian issue as their first priority. It's true that with the Palestinians alone, we Israelis can only give up on something and cannot get a lot. But with the rest of the Arab world it's clear that we have a lot to gain, from legitimacy in the eyes of our neighbors, to opportunities in enormous infrastructure projects, and commercial and economic cooperation. Adapting this approach will enable us to overcome at least part of the friction that

we have with the American administration and will pave the way back to a working relationship. In fact, I want to emphasize here, that in spite all our differences with the Obama administration, this President provided unprecedented support for Israel. The Israeli intelligence community enjoys unparalleled cooperation with their American counterparts, and both sides enjoy the fruit of this collaboration. It would not have happened without the backing of the White House. The same applies to the relationship between our defense establishments. We receive the best airplanes on earth, financed mainly by American taxpayer money. Look at the iron dome, our missile defense system. This is a project backed by billions of dollars, with the wide acceptance of Congress and major support from the professional and political level in the Pentagon, but it couldn't have happened without the commitment of the President. Obama, Biden, Kerry, Carter, Dempsey-

they are all part of the solution. And we have to work together, in the right way.

The world still needs America and looks towards Washington to spearhead the way. There is no alternative to your leadership, and it cannot be done without taking certain risks on the world arena. The US economy has come out of the 2008 crisis better than Europe and other regions, except for the Chinese perhaps who are on a different place on the S curve. And it's critical to see the Americans maintain their attitude of being exceptional, but improving their understanding of details and nuances of the rest of the world.

And I should tell you, the positioning of the United States in the Middle East and especially with Assad and Iran is extremely important for the future.

Senior American officials told me more than once in the past several years about this idea first announced by Hillary Clinton, to pivot to the East. So what will

happen when you pivot to the East? You will see China becoming a major player on the world’s stage. You will have a symbiotic relationship based on trade, currencies, and other issues. But underneath this umbrella of symbiotic relationship, the Chinese will keep churning into the vital interests of your best allies in the Far East. And when those allies will have to contemplate for themselves, behind closed doors in their capitals, to what extent America can be relied upon, for support, as a pillar of stability, they will look towards the last place where the Americans were active, which is the Middle East. Thus, the policy and impressions that America leaves in the Middle East today are vital for the future .as well

Looking at last 10 years worldwide, and despite the headlines telling us about the never-ending crises, you'll find humankind in a dramatically better situation. Hundreds of millions of people have been

taken out of extreme poverty, access to water improved noticeably, there was a sharp decline in infant deaths, and even in the most remote places on earth, there is much better access to medical services and serious coordination combatting major diseases. Learning has been incredibly improved by use of the Internet. You can now study through Khan Academy, led by an American of Indian origin Salman Khan. People around the world are studying online, from early first grade, enjoying the best teachers in math and science from their coffee shop in India, or their living room in Tanzania. And that gives great opportunities for people. Together, these changes amount to a major transformation in the right direction.

But there is still so much to do. An estimated two billion people are still living on less than 4 dollars a day. That's about the amount of money that the European Union subsidizes each individual cow in Europe from birth to the restaurant. We

still see too many deprived places that are waiting for modern education.

Beyond what I have told you today, I am most importantly the father of three daughters. I have always told them, who are now all grown up, how lucky they are to have been born in the 20th century, and in a place like Israel. But this is not the case for the majority of women worldwide. In order to inherently change the backward-looking situation in much of the world, women need access to high school education. We've seen it in Malaysia, where the reproduction rate decreased and the participation in the work force dramatically rose, all within one generation. When women are educated, and given the equal rights they deserve, there's no going back, since the now educated women won't let it happen.

If we focus on these elements, together with a determined world leadership, I'm

confident we can succeed in our struggles and forge a better world, where the children of the present students here will come back here, empowered, pursuing their happiness and self-fulfillment, and include the self-fulfillment of others.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.